

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 1963

## Genius of the Atom Bomb

Julius Robert Oppenheimer

DR. J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER, A GENIUS IN physics, was 38 years old when he was called from his university classes to lead the Manhattan project that developed the atomic bomb and brought World War II to an end. To friends and associates he was known as "Oppie."

Man during the hectic days when he was administrator, scientist and diplomat of the

super-secret bomb project.

Dr. Oppenheimer wore a brown pork-pie hat in his travels between groups of scientists working on the project. Frequently the hat was hung in laboratories and offices as a symbol that he was at hand.

On Aug. 6, 1945, when the first uranium bomb pulverized Hiroshima, the War Department announced that Dr. Oppenheimer "is to be credited with achieving the implementation of atomic energy for military purposes."

### Troubled by Success

Dr. Oppenheimer was among the many scientists troubled by this enormous accomplishment that had loosed such an awesome force upon mankind. Not long ago he remarked that scientists had come, because of this experience, to know sin.

Yesterday it was disclosed that Dr. Oppenheimer, now director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., will receive the Fermi Award, the highest honor conferred by the Atomic Energy Commission.

Dr. Oppenheimer rarely makes public appearances. At scientific meetings he speaks, with diffidence and modesty, in a low voice that does not carry far. His listeners have to strain to hear his words, which are usually illuminating.

Dr. Oppenheimer, a thin man, is 6 feet tall and has close-cropped hair. He chain-smokes cigarettes.

### A Touch of the Poet

In his writing he is almost a poet, beautifully fluent. He moves gracefully. He is a scholar and well versed in eight languages.

J. Robert Oppenheimer was born in New York on April 22, 1904. His father was a well-to-do textile importer, who had come to this country from Germany at the age of 17. His mother was a Baltimore artist.

At the age of 11 he was elected to the New York Mineralogical Society. He attended Ethical Culture School here. In three years he completed a Harvard College course summa cum laude. He studied at Cambridge University in England.

At Goettingen in Germany he earned his doctorate in 1927 with a thesis on quantum mechanics. It was finished three weeks after he had enrolled. In 1929, he joined the physics faculties of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and the University of California in Berkeley.

His interests ranged far and wide. He was a



Associated Press

Physics with poetic flair

Sophocles early. At Harvard he found Dante and pored over French literature. The scope of his erudition is enormous. He knows art and he knows music. He was an enormously popular teacher with a wide influence on his students.

He came by his interests in physics early.

Once, it is recalled, he made an infrequent trip to the playground as a third or fourth grader. A child threw a ball out of the playground and the director criticized throw. But young Robert calculated the force with which the ball struck the sidewalk and demonstrated that it could not have hurt anyone.

### A Scholar's 'Paradise'

Harvard herecalls as an intellectual paradise.

"I loved it," he said later. "I almost came alive. I took more courses than I was supposed to, lived in the stacks, just raided the place intellectually."

In his teaching days in California, Dr. Oppenheimer stuck to the academic life. He recalls that he had no radio, no telephone, and he never read a newspaper or a current magazine. His friends were faculty people from Pasadena and Berkeley—scientists, classicists and artists.

"I was interested in man and his experience," Dr. Oppenheimer said later. "I was deeply interested in my science, but I had no understanding of the relations of man to his society."

In 1940 he married Katherine Puening. The Oppenheimers had two children,

# E.C. PRIZE GOING TO OPPENHEIMER

Fermi Award Signals Move to Annul Security Ban

By JOHN W. FINNEY  
Special to the New York Times  
WASHINGTON, April 4.—The Enrico Fermi Award, the highest honor the Atomic Energy Commission can bestow, was today announced to go to Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist who was declared a security risk by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1954, but who was recently chosen to receive the highest honor the commission can bestow.

The decision to present Dr. Oppenheimer with the \$50,000 award, which was announced by the commission on April 3, was a surprise. The award, which was announced by the commission on April 3, was a surprise. The award, which was announced by the commission on April 3, was a surprise.

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Particularly within the Kennedy Administration, there was reaction to the award.

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The Fermi Award, named for Enrico Fermi, the Italian-born scientist who directed the scientific team that achieved the first controlled chain reaction was authorized in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. The law provides that the commission may, upon recommendation of the General Advisory Committee and with the approval of the President, award the honor for any especially meritorious contribution to the development, use or control of atomic energy.

**Awarded Unanimously**  
At a meeting late last month in Albuquerque, N.M., the general advisory committee voted unanimously to give this year's award, which since 1956 has carried a \$50,000 reward, to Dr. Oppenheimer.

The committee, which Dr. Oppenheimer headed after World War II as the top scientific advisory group to the commission, is the top scientific advisory group to the commission. Its members now are Dr. Manson Benedict, of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, chairman; Dr. Kenneth S. Pitzer, president of Rice University; Dr. Philip H. Abelson, the Carnegie Institution of Washington; Dr. Norman Ramsey, Harvard University; Dr. J. C. Warner, president of the Carnegie Institute of Technology; Dr. Eugene P. Wigner, Princeton University; Dr. John H. Williams, the University of Minnesota; Dr. Robert A. Chertoff, the Union Carbide Corporation; Dr. L. R. Hafstad, General Motors Research Laboratories; and William Webster, president of Yankee Atomic Electric Company.

**Sent to The President**

At a meeting on March 25, the five-man A.E.C. unanimously approved the committee's recommendation and submitted the Oppenheimer nomination to the White House. The nomination was shortly approved by President Kennedy.

Dr. Oppenheimer, according to White House officials, was informed at Princeton, N.J., today of the honor. Since 1947, he has been director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

If tradition is followed, the formal presentation will come on Dec. 2, the twenty-first anniversary of the first chain reaction in an atomic pile built in Stagg Field in Chicago, early in World War II.

Oppenheimer has made no move to reopen his security case. But he was reported to have made it clear that he would welcome action by the Administration to clear his name.

**A Touch of Irony**  
There is a personal irony in Dr. Oppenheimer's receiving the award this year, a year after it was given to Dr. Edward Teller.

The two scientists were the principal protagonists in the controversy over whether to build the hydrogen bomb—a controversy that figured largely in the security charges against Dr. Oppenheimer. And during the lengthy security hearings Dr. Teller was on of the principal hostile witnesses against Dr. Oppenheimer, his former director at the Los Alamos Laboratory.

As one way to vindicate Dr. Oppenheimer, the commission informally proposed to the General Advisory Committee last year that the award for 1962 be shared by Dr. Teller and Dr. Oppenheimer. The suggestion was turned down by the committee.

**Ordered By Eisenhower**

The Oppenheimer case burst into the open on April 13, 1954, when the Atomic Energy Commission announced that in December 1953, President Eisenhower had directed that a "black wall" be placed between Dr. Oppenheimer and secret

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data" pending a security review.

A three-man panel, headed by Gordon Gray, then president of the University of North Carolina, was set up to review the charges. Dr. Oppenheimer had been accused of associating with Communists before and during World War II, of hiring Communist and ex-Communists at the Los Alamos Laboratory, of aiding and abetting Communist causes and of actively opposing the hydrogen bomb project after it had been ordered by President Truman.

The Gray panel announced on June 1 that it had found Dr. Oppenheimer to be "a loyal citizen" but had recommended, by a 2-1 vote, against reinstating his security clearance as a consultant to the commission.

**Approval By A.E.C.**  
The panel's recommendation was upheld later that month by the commission, which announced on June 29 that it had voted 4 to 1, against granting security clearance to Dr. Oppenheimer.

In the majority were Lewis L. Strauss, the commission chairman, Eugene M. Zuckert, now Secretary of the Air Force, Joseph Campbell, now Comptroller General, and the late Thomas E. Murray.

The lone dissenter was Dr. Henry D. Smyth, now the United States representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The majority opinion, signed by Messrs. Strauss, Zuckert and Campbell, held that Dr. Oppenheimer was security risk on the basis of "fundamental defects in his character" and because "his associations with persons known to him to be Communists have extended far beyond the tolerable limits of prudence and self-restraint."

In a separate opinion, Mr. Murray went beyond the majority and questioned Dr. Oppenheimer's loyalty.

In his dissent, Dr. Smyth maintained that Dr. Oppenheimer's "loyalty and trustworthiness emerge clearly from his record of Government service and that there was no reason to believe that he has ever divulged any secret information."

**Moves Begun in 1958**  
The move to reverse the security decision against Dr. Oppenheimer or to take some step to "clear his name" began within the Government when Dr. Strauss left the commission.

When his successor, John A. McCone, now director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was named commission chairman in June, 1958, Senator Clinton P. Anderson, then chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, asked him to review the Oppenheimer case.

As a result, Loren K. Olson then general counsel of the commission, made a detailed review of the case.

As he recalled recently, Mr. Olson concluded that was "a messy record from a legal standpoint, that the charges kept shifting at each level of the proceedings, that the evidence was stale and consisted of information that was 12 years old and was known when a security clearance was granted during World War II and the case. From the back row, Mr. Naiden was reported to have objected that the commission could not take such a position since, in effect, it would be endorsing the position taken during the Eisenhower Administration to reinstate Dr. Oppenheimer's position.

**Appointment Suggested**  
Mr. Olson recommended appointing Dr. Oppenheimer as a consultant on a classified project. Then, he pointed out, would require a new security investigation. Such a report would be sent before the commission and the commission would grant clearance and "that all three would be to it."

Nothing positive resulted from this commission discussion. Action seemingly was put off on the common agreement that the question went beyond the commission's scope.

Behind the scenes, however, the selected members of the commission continued to discuss action to vindicate Dr. Oppenheimer.

There were also continuing efforts by outside groups. Joseph Volpe, for example, a Washington lawyer and general counsel of the commission from 1948 to 1951, urged Administration officials and members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy to get Mr. Volpe had worked for Dr. Oppenheimer on the Manhattan Project.

Some influential members of the Congressional Committee made clear that they were not opposed to reopening the Oppenheimer case but urged that action be deferred until after the election.

**Invited to White House**  
As a "trial balloon" to test public reaction, the Administration invited Dr. Oppenheimer to a White House dinner on April 23, 1962, that honored forty-nine Nobel Prize winners. The invitation was regarded by some White House officials as the first step in the "rehabilitation" of Dr. Oppenheimer.

During the dinner, Dr. Seaborg was understood to have approached Dr. Oppenheimer and asked whether he would like another hearing. Dr. Oppenheimer was reported to have replied, in effect, "not on your life."

The Seaborg question and the Oppenheimer response pointed out the basic problem confronting Administration officials—that of finding a way to "clear" Dr. Oppenheimer without reopening the hearings and subjecting him to another round of interrogation.

Late in the spring of 1962, in March, Mr. Olson asked whether a letter from the federal Government was "floating around within the Administration that it would be a mistake not to reinstate Dr. Oppenheimer to act then. Those taking this view believed it would be wise to take any action that might make the Oppenheimer case an issue in the 1963 election, whose first action on becoming commission chairman was to read the 992-page record of activity within the transcript of the Oppenheimer hearings and the office of Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner, the President's science adviser. In recent weeks officials have been indicating privately that action could be expected shortly.

The climax will come tomorrow with the White House announcement.

When Mr. Olson was promoted to the commission in May, 1959, he began trying to work out an arrangement to reinstate Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance. He proposed that the commission's research division be divided into two groups, one of which would have the commission grant a security clearance.

Nothing came of these behind-the-scenes efforts during the Eisenhower Administration.

The commission's position was reinforced in January, 1953, when President Eisenhower told a news conference that he regarded the Oppenheimer case as "settled" and if only if "a substantial new evidence were presented."

With the coming of the Kennedy Administration there was a new flurry of activity within the commission, the White House and from outside groups.

As a Senator and as a Presidential candidate, Mr. Kennedy had not taken a position on the Oppenheimer case, but the prevailing belief was that the new Administration would look kindly on "clearing" Oppenheimer's name.

**A Change of Climate**  
This belief was reinforced by the appointment of Dr. Gray, a liberal who had worked with Dr. Oppenheimer on the Manhattan Project, early in 1961.

An important impetus to commission action came from the Federation of American Scientists, a political action committee created by a group of scientists in 1946. In October, 1961, the federation wrote a letter to the commission urging a complete review of the Oppenheimer case.

For reasons not clear, knowledge of the federation letter was originally restricted to the two scientist members of the commission—Dr. Seaborg and Dr. Lewis J. Haworth—and kept from the two lawyer members, Mr. Olson and Mr. S. Graham.

It was only in the following March that the two lawyer commissioners were told by Neil Naiden, general counsel of the commission, about the federation letter.

**Provoke Discussion**  
During a commission meeting in March, Mr. Olson asked whether a letter from the federal Government was "floating around within the Administration that it would be a mistake not to reinstate Dr. Oppenheimer to act then. Those taking this view believed it would be wise to take any action that might make the Oppenheimer case an issue in the 1963 election, whose first action on becoming commission chairman was to read the 992-page record of activity within the transcript of the Oppenheimer hearings and the office of Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner, the President's science adviser. In recent weeks officials have been indicating privately that action could be expected shortly.

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# Oppenheimer Selected To Get Fermi Award

By Howard Simon  
Staff Reporter

J. Robert Oppenheimer, controversial atomic scientist, has been selected to receive the \$50,000 Fermi Award—the Atomic Energy Commission's highest honor, it was learned last night.

Oppenheimer, who lost the right to do secret work for the Government in a celebrated security case in 1954, was picked unanimously for the award by the AEC's 9-member General Advisory Committee, a group of eminent American scientists.

The award was endorsed, again unanimously, by the present Atomic Energy Commission and was approved by President Kennedy.

The Fermi award, which is clearance to Oppenheimer by given for "especially meritorious contribution to the development, use or control of atomic energy," goes to Oppenheimer for his contributions, to theoretical nuclear physics and for his leadership in developing both the atomic bomb and peaceful applications of atomic energy.

Oppenheimer's selection will be viewed by many as representing a desire by the present Administration to redress what some consider a previous wrong.

It also has led to speculation that Oppenheimer might be requested to do secret work for the Government, which would automatically make him a candidate for new security clearance. The award itself does not reinstate Oppenheimer's security clearance.

The wartime scientific director of the Nation's Manhattan Project for building the first atomic bomb lost his clearance after a lengthy and acrimonious hearing to determine whether he was a security risk.

Essentially Oppenheimer's judgment as regards security was called into question because of his association with French scientist Haakon

Chevalier, a Communist. But questions also were raised about his opposition to the development of the hydrogen bomb and about his loyalty.

The recent debate resulting from the questions split the scientific community and the wounds still have not been totally healed.

The AEC denied security clearance to Oppenheimer by a 4 to 1 vote in 1954. Three of the four AEC commissioners — Chairman Lewis L. Strauss, Eugene M. Zuckert and Joseph Campbell — based their decision on the conclusion that Oppenheimer had shown "fundamental defects" of character, and "wilful disregard" of security obligations. The fourth majority member was Commissioner Thomas F. Murray.

Commissioner Henry D. Smyth voted for Oppenheimer, declaring that "he is completely loyal."

The Oppenheimer decision landed in the AEC's lap in 1964 after President Eisenhower had suspended Oppenheimer's clearance pending review of charges against the scientist. A special three-member board concluded unanimously in May, 1954, that Oppenheimer was a loyal citizen but it voted 2 to 1 against restoring his security clearance. The AEC's decision followed in June.

Informed sources yesterday said that Strauss, along with other former AEC chairmen and members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, had been informed of the decision to give "Op. n." as he is known in the scientific community, the award.

The first hint that the Administration might approve Oppenheimer came last year when he was invited to a dinner at the White House of Nobel Prize winners.

Oppenheimer is not a Nobel Prize winner.

Since 1947 he has been director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

Previous winners of the award, named for the late Enrico Fermi, pioneer atomic scientist, include John von Neuman, E. O. Lawrence, Eugene Wigner, Glenn T. Seaborg and chairman of the AEC, Hans Bethe and Edward Teller.

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MEMORANDUM OF CALL

Date	Time
13 May	

TO-

*Drene*

☐ YOU WERE CALLED BY-

☒ YOU WERE VISITED BY-

*Burtha*

TELEPHONE:	Number or code	Extension

☐ PLEASE CALL  
☐ WILL CALL AGAIN  
☐ RETURNING YOUR CALL  
☐ IS REFERRED TO YOU BY:

☐ WAITING TO SEE YOU  
☐ WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

LEFT THIS MESSAGE:

*she talked to  
late this morning and  
she confirmed the fact  
that the DCT ~~was~~ not  
going to nominate anyone for  
the House committee*

Received By:

*f. n. c.*

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